suggestion that diplomatic interests preclude similar provisions for Americans by the State Department. The annual report required under the bill must make this clear, and the Commission should give strict scrutiny to enforcement of this provision according to its clear intention. Finally, the victimization of Mr. Hunter for blowing the whistle on this matter is unconscionable, and the Commission should recommend and monitor speedy redress of his status by the State Department.

FORCED CONVERSION OF MINOR U.S. CITIZENS

If the neglect of the worship needs of Americans abroad is deplorable, inaction in the cases of the victimization of minors who have been taken to a foreign land, subjected to forced religious conversion, and prevented from returning to the United States where they would enjoy religious freedom is intolerable. One particular case illustrates the severity of this problem, that of Alia and Aisha Al Gheshiyan. In Chicago, Illinois, on January 25th, 1986, Alia, aged seven, and Aisha, aged three and a half, visited the apartment of their father, Khalid Bin Hamad Al Gheshiyan, a citizen and Saudi Arabia. The girl's mother, Patricia Roush had been awarded custody of the children by a U.S. court but had agreed to permit their father to have the children for an overnight visit. He promised to return them to their mother the next day. However, instead of returning the girls to their mother, Al Gheshiyan abducted the two girls and took them to Saudi Arabia. On January 28th 1986, an Illinois court issued a warrant for Al Gheshiyan's arrest on charges of child abduction.

Having been removed from the United States and placed under the law of Saudi Arabia, where no non-Islamic region may be practiced, the girls (who had been baptized as Christians) were obliged to give up their previous Christian identity. According to their mother, who has secured documentation of her daughters' mandatory conversion to Islam:

My daughters Alia and Aisha Gheshiyan were raised in a Christian home by a Christian mother and were not familiar with Islam or their father's family, culture or religion. (Which he stated he was disobeying when he was in the United States for twelve years). My daughters are now young women who are nineteen and sixteen years of age with no possible choices of religious freedom. If they do not practice Islam, they could be killed—quite possibly by their own father. This is not uncommon in Saudi Arabia. If a child, especially a daughter, does not submit to her father's commands, he has the right to put her to death.

It is important to remember that in cases like that of Alia and Aisha, their plight amounts to a life sentence, because under Saudi law, even after attaining majority (as Alia already has) they may not travel abroad without their father's permission (in the case of unmarried girls and woman) or their husband's permission (in the case of married women).

As if the total denial of rights to these Americans were not bad enough, even more deplorable has been the response of the Department of State, which has simply dismissed the matter as a ''child custody'' case and has advised Ms. Roush to hire a lawyer for proceedings in a Shari's religious court—a court in which she, as a non-Muslim and a woman, has virtually no standing. There is no evidence that the State Department has ever dealt with this (and other such forced conversions) as not just a private dispute or a routine consular access case but as a state-to-state matter involving not only the solemn obligation of the government of the United States to secure the rights of its citizens but of the indefensible hostility of the Saudi government toward religious freedom. If the United States could make the fate of prominent Soviet Jewish ''refuseniks'' Natan Scharansky and Ida Nudel a matter of national policy in American relations with the Soviet Union—as we should have—the fate of Alia and Aisha must be seen as a litmus test of the willingness of the State Department to give proper weight to the requirements of this statue in its relations with the Riyadh government. The Commission should recommend specific action as the highest level to ensure that the United States no longer gives the impression that such treatment of its citizens is acceptable or is only a routine ''private'' or ''family'' matter.

COSPONSORSHIP OF S. 1529

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I would like to state for the RECORD that Senator LEAHY agreed to cosponsor S. 1529, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1998 on September 30.

Due to an unfortunate clerical error, his name was not added until today, October 15.

Y2K CHALLENGE

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, almost everyone has heard of the impending ''Year 2000'' or ''Y2K'' problem, also commonly known as the ''millennium bug.'' The problem itself is fairly simple. In the early years of computers, programmers set aside only two digits to denote the year in dates. To the ''minds'' behind computers and other technology-driven devices, the year 2000 is indistinguishable from the year 1900. The problem is present in billions of lines of software as well as billions of small computer chips embedded in electronic devices used by Americans every day. Without the necessary checks to ensure that electronic devices can operate by January 1, 2000, the impact of this computer bug could be wide-ranging and even disastrous. Household gadgets like garage door openers or VCRs could break down. Traffic delays could be caused by noncomplaint traffic lights. Stock exchanges and nuclear reactors could shut down.

Although the problem is easy to describe, it has proven difficult and time-consuming to solve. To make the necessary corrections, each line of computer code must be hand-checked by a computer programmer, and all computer chips must be tested. In the United States alone, it is estimated that it will cost over $600 billion to correct the millions of lines of computer program code. Not only are these corrections expensive, the process of analyzing, correcting, testing and integrating software and hardware has become a heavy management burden on all levels of government as well as the private sector.

Although the federal government has been working to meet the time constraints of the Y2K deadline, the General Accounting Office has found that problems still remain with computer systems at every federal agency they examined. Overall, it is estimated that the federal government must check at least 7,336 mission critical computer systems. Some larger systems, those used by the Internal Revenue Service, for example, have more than 60 lines of code per system. The Office of Management and Budget has established an interagency committee to facilitate federal efforts to instruct each federal agency on the best possible solutions.

Some federal agencies are closer to achieving Y2K compliance than others. The Treasury Department's Financial Management Service, responsible for paying Social Security disability and retirement benefits, Veterans' benefits, and IRS refunds, installed two new Y2K compliant systems earlier this month. Treasury Department officials are confident they will be ready and checks will arrive on time.

The Federal Aviation Administration is among the agencies furthest behind in this process. This is of particular concern to me. A recent survey by the Air Transport Association of America shows that 35 percent of our nation's airports surveyed do not yet have a Y2K plan and that only 20 of 81 of our country's larger airports are on schedule to fix their Y2K problems. Although FAA officials testified that they will, in fact, be fully compliant by the end of June 1999, this will not give their administrators much time for testing the updated systems. The Transportation Department is prepared to shut down unsafe aviation systems domestically and will be working with the State Department to access the safety of international systems so they will be ready to stop flights to unsafe airports. Unless we can accelerate Y2K compliance at our airports, the rippling Y2K effect on air travel could make air travel inconvenient and costly to the American traveler.

During this session of Congress, we have devoted a great deal of attention to the Y2K challenge. A special Senate Subcommittee on Y2K, headed by our colleague from Utah, Senator ROBERT BENNETT, held several hearings to raise awareness of this problem and to discuss possible solutions. To expedite the federal government's efforts to correct

all agency computer systems, last year Congress provided $86 million to perform Y2K updates at the Federal Aviation Administration, the Treasury Department and the Health Care Financing Administration. This fall, Congress is expected to provide another $3.25 billion in emergency funding to ensure the federal government can fully meet the Y2K challenge.

We also need to encourage companies, large and small, to meet this challenge. During congressional hearings, representatives from the private sector discussed hesitancy to disclose any information about their own Y2K progress. Companies are reluctant to work together based almost entirely on fears of potential litigation and legal liabilities. For example, in my state of Ohio, NCR, a world-wide provider of information technology solutions, has been working on Y2K solutions since 1996. NCR made valuable progress in research on its own preparedness for Y2K and in finding solutions to help other businesses prepare for the millennium. Unfortunately, they were hesitant to deliver these statements for fear that they would be sued. In order to encourage the private sector to share valuable information and experiences, these lines of communication need to be open. Congress recently passed legislation, S. 2392, to encourage companies to freely discuss potential Y2K problems, solutions, test results and readiness amongst themselves. This law will provide businesses the temporary protection from lawsuits regarding statements made about Y2K.

As the chairman of the Antitrust, Business Rights and Competition Subcommittee, I am usually reluctant to support any exemption from our antitrust laws. As a general proposition it is very important that these laws apply broadly to all sectors of the economy to protect consumers and allow businesses to operate in an environment of fair and rigorous competition. However, I do support the narrow, temporary exemption passed by Congress as a part of our overall effort to address the Y2K problem.

This exemption does not cover conduct such as price fixing or group boycotts. Even with these important limitations this antitrust exemption should provide significant protection for those who might otherwise be reluctant to pool resources and share information.

S. 2392 is crucial to opening the lines of communication between companies, particularly those in the utility and telecommunications industries, which were cited by the Senate Y2K Subcommittee as its top priority for review. This legislation will be a giant step in implementing Y2K solutions. Not only will the bill promote discussion, it will also establish a single government website for access to Y2K information.

Mr. President, both the supplemental spending and information sharing bills represent the kind of effort we need to meet the Y2K challenge. Without question, we are in an era of rapid communication and innovation, and the role computer technology plays in our daily lives is a constant reminder of this fact. Now, with this technology at risk of disrupting our lives as we usher in a new century and millennium, our ability to both communicate and to innovate will be put to the test over the next 14 months. It will take a combined effort from the public and private sector to pass this test.

FAILURE TO PASS JUVENILE CRIME LEGISLATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last Friday, the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, my good friend from Utah, spoke on the floor about juvenile justice legislation. He indicated that he will be urging the Majority Leader to make this issue one of the top legislative priorities in the 106th Congress. It is indeed unfortunate that the Senate has failed to consider legislation in this important area.

Improving our Nation's juvenile justice system and preventing juvenile delinquency has strong bipartisan support in Congress and in the White House. That is why I and other Democrats have introduced juvenile crime legislation both at the beginning and the end of this Congress. Within the first weeks of the 105th Congress, I joined Senator DASCHLE in introducing the ''Youth Violence, Crime and Drug Abuse Control Act of 1997,'' S. 15, and last month introduced, with the support of Senators DASCHLE, BIDEN and other Democratic members, the ''Safe Schools, Safe Streets and Secure Borders Act of 1998,'' S. 2484. That is why the Administration transmitted juvenile crime legislation, the ''Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Control Act of 1997,'' S. 362, which I introduced with Senator BIDEN on the Administration's behalf in February 1997.

Given the strong interest in this issue from both sides of the aisle, the failure of the Senate to consider juvenile crime legislation would appear puzzling. Indeed, the House passed juvenile justice legislation three times this year, when it sent to the Senate H.R. 3 on May 8, 1997, H.R. 1818 on July 15, 1997, and both these bills again attached to S. 2073 on September 15, 1998. The Senate juvenile crime bill, S. 10, was voted on by the Judiciary Committee in July 1997, and then left to languish for over a year.

The Republicans have never called up S. 10 for consideration by the full Senate. Instead, in early September they rushed to the floor with no warning and offered terms for bringing up the bill that would have significantly limited debate and amendments on the many controversial items in the bill. For example, although the substitute juvenile crime bill that the Republicans wanted to debate contained over 160 changes from the Committee-reported bill, the majority wished to limit Democratic amendments to five. This offer was unacceptable, as the Republicans well knew before they ever offered it.

We should recognize this offer for what it is: a procedural charade engaged in by the Republicans in a feeble effort to place the blame on the minority for the majority's failure to bring up juvenile justice legislation in the Senate. Nevertheless, I suggested a plan for a full and fair debate on S. 10. On September 25, 1998, I put in the record a proposal that would have limited the amendments offered by Democrats to the most controversial aspects of the bill, such as restoring the core protection for juvenile status offenders to keep them out of jail, keeping juveniles who are in custody separated from adult inmates, and ensuring adequate prevention funding.

I never heard back from the Republicans. They simply ignored my proposal, and failed to turn to this issue again on the floor of the Senate. These facts make clear that assertions about Democrats refusing proposals to limit the number of amendments to S. 10, and refusing to permit a conference on House-passed legislation, could not be farther from the truth. Indeed, no proposal to agree to a conference was ever propounded on the floor of the Senate.

During the past year, I have spoken on the floor of the Senate and at hearings on numerous occasions about my concerns with S. 10, including on November 13, 1997, January 29, 1998, April 1, 1998, June 23, 1998, and September 8, 1998. On each of those occasions, I expressed my willingness to work with the Chairman in a bipartisan manner to improve this bill. Since Committee consideration of the bill, I have continued to raise the areas of concern that went unaddressed in the Committee-reported bill. Specifically, I was concerned that the bill skimped on effective prevention efforts to stop children from getting into trouble in the first place.

Second, I was concerned that the bill would gut the core protections, which have been in place for over 20 years to protect children that come into contact with the criminal justice system and keep them out of harm's way from adult inmates, to keep status and non-offenders out of jail altogether, and to address disproportionate minority confinement.

Third, I was concerned about the federalization of juvenile crime due to S. 10's elimination of the requirement that federal courts may only get involved in prosecutions of juveniles for offenses with which the federal government has concurrent jurisdiction with the State, if the State cannot or declines to prosecute the juvenile.

Finally, I was concerned the new accountability block grant in S. 10 contained onerous eligibility requirements that would end up imposing on the States a one-size-fits-all uniform sewn-up in Washington for dealing with juvenile crime. I know many States viewed